

Connecting Our Children to Local Foods

Montana's Farm to School Programs

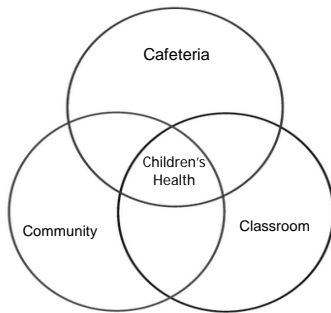
Mary Stein, MS
Team Nutrition



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Dorine Jurens, State Superintendent
opi.mt.gov



What is Farm to School?



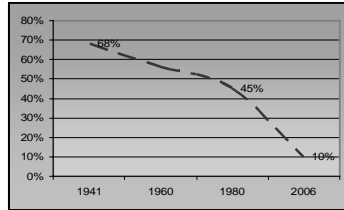
Why "Local" Matters

- Access to healthy foods
- Viability of small farms
- Enhance local economies
- Correlation exists: Caring about where your food comes from and healthy eating



Where is Our Food Coming From?

- 1900-1950's:
70% of what
Montanans
ate was
produced in
the state
- Today: Only
10% of
Montanans
foods are
produced in
the state.



Graph courtesy of Grow Montana Coalition

K-12 Food Market

An Opportunity for Local Producers

- 148,000 students served
- Approximately \$25 million spent on non-commodity foods by school districts in 2008 (commodity foods account for \$3.5 million).
- \$28 million in federal reimbursements



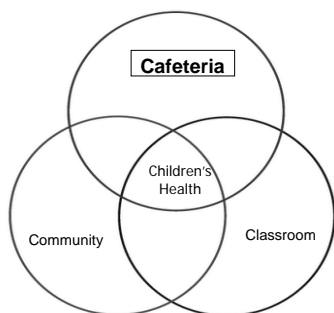
K-12 Food Market: An Opportunity for Local Producers

- K-12 schools are the largest component of food expenditures among Montana public institutions
- K-12 schools represent the greatest long-term potential for growth in the use of Montana-produced food



Unlocking the Food-Buying Potential of Montana's Public Institutions.
Grow Montana. 2006
<http://www.growmontana.ncat.org/>

Farm to School Cafeteria, Classroom, Community



Finding Local Products

- Search Existing Online Product/Producer Lists
- Get **Montana Product Lists** from current food distributor.



Suggestion...

One Step at a Time

Consider one or two products to start with. Can you start buying those one or two products from local sources?



Carrots or Carrot Coins?

Processing Needs When Purchasing
Local Foods

Case Study: Missoula Public Schools



Ensuring Food Safety

- **STEP 1:** Work with your county sanitarian from the start.
- **STEP 2:** Go through a series of basic food safety questions with your food supplier/farmer.

Do an online search:
"A Checklist for Purchasing
Local Produce"



More on Food Safety

- Good Agricultural Practices
Project (GAPS)

From Cornell University

<http://www.gaps.cornell.edu/>



- Food Safety Begins on the Farm
- Sample Record Keeping Sheets
- FSI (Food Safety Investigation) - extends food safety education to high school classroom...

Marketing Your "Made in Montana" Items





Finding Time to Implement a Farm to School Program

Success Story:
FoodCorp



Farm to Cafeteria Connections:

A Communications
Hub for All Things
Farm to School



<http://www.growmontana.ncat.org/>

Beyond the Cafeteria

Local Foods in Other Venues at School

- Fundraising
- Student Stores
- Classroom parties
- Club/activity events



From Farms to Schools A New School Fundraising Concept





Pilot Project Results

- 2 schools sold \$18,000 of Montana food products
- All the money stayed in Montana
- 40% to schools, 60% to producers
- Healthy fundraising items



Future of Farm to School Fundraiser



- Gallatin County – Expanded to seven schools for 2009.
- Pilot Materials and final report on OPI School Nutrition Program Website (Farm to School section)
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/FTS.html>



Farm to School ...in the classroom

- Nutrition education
- Agriculture education
- Food preparation experiences
- School garden
- Field trips

School Gardens



Hoophouses Extend Growing Season



School Gardens



Plant a pizza garden!

Farm Field Trips

Another Curriculum Aspect of Farm to School

- Community Connections
 - Children connect to Farmers
 - Farmers connect to Schools
 - Community citizens/leaders acknowledge importance of local food production, wellbeing of community



Does Farm to School Make a Difference?



- Nutrition and Health
 - Improved eating behaviors
 - Improved knowledge on food and nutrition
 - Increased interest in "trying" new fruits and veggies

Joshi, A et al., J Hunger and Env Nutr, 2008; vol 3.

Garden Programs Improve Children's Eating Habits

Students Participating in Garden Project, enjoy:

- Taste-testing fruits and veggies
- Preparing fruits and veggies
- Working in garden
- Learning about fruits and veggies



Results:

- Increase in the number of fruits and vegetable ever eaten
- Increase in fruit and veggie asking behavior at home!

Heim, S. et al., JADA, 2009; 109: 1220-1226.

Does Farm to School Make a Difference?

■ Local Economies:

■ March 18, 2009 Report

- Economic Impact Analysis of Investing School Food Dollars in the Local Food Economy
- Two large school districts in Oregon

■ Results

- Money was kept in state
- For every food dollar spent, an additional 87 cents was spent in Oregon – creating a multiplier of 1.87 for farm to school spending



http://www.ecotrust.org/press/f2s_investment_20090318.html

Important Resources...

National Farm to School Organization

<http://www.farmtoschool.org/>



Questions?



Mary Stein
(406)994-5640
mstein@montana.edu

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/FTS.html>
